

PMW video documentary: "Leave: The origins of Palestinian refugees" (in their own words)

Itamar Marcus | May 15, 2024

- **Arab refugees tell their personal stories: It was Arab leaders, Arab armies, and the Arab media that caused the Arabs to flee and become refugees**



During Israel's War of Independence from 1948 to 1949, as many as 750,000 Arabs left their homes in Israel. The PA has made accusing Israel of expelling the Arabs a formative part of its narrative. It still refers to this migration as the "Nakba," meaning "catastrophe," which it commemorates every year on May 15.

However, interviews with refugees as well as newspaper articles in the official PA press by refugees and about refugees, show that the Arabs blame their own leaders, their own armies, and their own Arab media—which lied to them and created unnecessary fear—for their flight from Israel.

Many Arabs were directly instructed by Arab armies and militias to leave their homes for just a few hours or weeks to clear the way for military operations.

Fear:

Current PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas recounts that his family and all the Arabs of Safed chose to flee, fearing that Israel would take revenge for the Arab massacres committed against Jews in Safed in 1929. The Arabs left on their own.

"The most dangerous thing for us was the [Arab] media."

As part of their propaganda to demonize Israel, Arab media fabricated stories of so-called Israeli atrocities, which created fear. One Arab refugee described the Arab media as saying: "In a certain town, the Jews did this and that. They killed and slaughtered. Of course, the newspapers lied, and the radio also lied. In other words, they deceived the people." He concludes: "The most dangerous thing for us was the [Arab] media."

No acknowledgment of responsibility:

Whether the Arabs left because of fictitious media or instructions from their leaders, the impact is still felt today. The Arab world has refused to accept responsibility or to absorb the Arab immigrants into their own countries. Instead, they forced them and millions of their descendants to remain as "refugees."

The great Palestinian Authority secret:

A cornerstone of the PA's ideology and propaganda is to blame Israel for the refugees and to demand that 100% of the descendants of the Arabs who fled, which have now reached 5.9 million according to UNRWA, be settled in Israel. The PA, however, has never acknowledged the collective Arab responsibility for the refugee problem. Even though PMW has gathered these Arab testimonies from official PA media, the PA itself continues to falsely blame Israel, and only Israel. As time goes on and more refugees speak candidly, the picture emerging is that the refugees themselves have always known the truth and that they really place the blame on their own leaders.

If the PA would finally acknowledge this historical fact and work to settle the 5.9 million descendants of the original refugees as equal citizens in the Arab states where nearly all of them were born, one of the great impediments to peace would be removed.

equal rights and citizenship. Their numbers today have grown to 2,000,000. Israeli Arabs are found throughout society and serve in the Knesset, as judges, and teach in universities. While they are not drafted, many have volunteered to serve in the army, and some are officers.

Click [here](#) to view the video documentary.

The following is the text of the documentary:

LEAVE!

The origins of Palestinian refugees

(In Their Own Words)

Only with our clothes

Refugee from Bir Ma'in

Fuad Khader

"We left, I mean, the one who made us leave was the Jordanian army, because there were going to be battles and we would be under their feet. They told us: 'Leave. In 2 hours we will liberate it and then you'll return.' We left only with our clothes. We didn't take anything because we were supposed to return in 2 hours. Why carry anything?

We're still waiting for those 2 hours to this day."

[Official PA TV, May 15, 2013]

Two weeks is too much

Refugee from Ein Karem

Unidentified

"The radio stations of the Arab regimes kept repeating to us: 'Get away from the frontline. It's a matter of ten days, or at most two weeks, and we'll bring you back to Ein Karem [in Jerusalem].' And we said to ourselves, 'That's a very long time. Two weeks is too much.' That's what we thought [then]. And now 50 years have gone by."

Overcome With fear

Refugee from Safed

Mahmoud Abbas, Palestinian Authority Chairman

"The [Arab] Salvation Army withdrew from the city [Safed in 1948], causing the [Arab] people to begin emigrating. In Safed, just like Hebron, people were afraid that the Jews would take revenge for the [Arab] massacre [of 83 Jews] in 1929 (Note: 65 Jews were murdered in Hebron, 18 in Safed) ... [In 1948] the people were overcome with fear, and it caused them to leave the city in a disorderly way."

[Official PA TV, Jan. 1, 2013]

Go to Jordan

Refugee from Khirbet Al-Amour

Ali Hussein Ali Alyan

"This is all painful. These people defended themselves in 1948... In the end, they were told [by Arab leaders]: 'Leave and go to Jordan. It's just for a few weeks all in all and you'll return.'"

[Official PA TV, Oct. 2, 2022]

Leave Jaffa immediately

Refugee from Jaffa

Talal Abu Ghazaleh

"Cars with microphones roamed the streets [of Jaffa], demanding that people leave so the fighting would succeed. They called to us in Arabic to leave our homes: 'We - the Palestinians, the fighters - want to fight, and don't want you to impede us so we ask you to leave the city immediately' ... All of us - me, my family, and the others - left any way we could. We went to the port and boarded a ship."

[Official PA TV, Oct. 2, 2014]

Refugee from central Israel

Asmaa Jabir Balasimah

"We were told that the Jews attacked our region and it is better to evacuate the village and return after the battle is over. And indeed there were among us those who left a fire burning under the pot, those who left their flocks of sheep, and those who left their money and gold behind, based on the assumption that we would return after a few hours."

[Palestinian daily *Al-Ayyam*, May 16, 2006]

(PMW narration of newspaper)

Whoever stays in Palestine is a traitor

Unidentified refugee from Majdal (Ashkelon)

"My grandfather and my father told me that during the Nakba, our district officer issued an order that whoever stays in Palestine and in Majdal is a traitor..."

Ibrahim Sarsur, Head of the Islamic Movement in Israel: "The one who gave the order forbidding them to stay there bears guilt for this, in this life and the Afterlife, throughout history until Resurrection Day."

[Official PA TV, April 30, 1999]

The chief is a traitor

Displaced from Manshiya

Israeli citizen

Ahmad

- I remember someone, an Israeli officer, named Monjo.

- Yes.

He was from Kibbutz Ein HaMifratz. He was in contact with people from [the Arab village of] Manshiya, with the village chief. He [the Israeli] told the chief: "Tell them

is a traitor. And people began to flee.

[Official PA TV, July 24, 2023]

You'll return to Palestine

Refugee from Dir Al-Qasi

Sadek Mufid

"What they said at the time: ... 'By Allah, in a week or two, you'll return to Palestine.' The Arab armies entered Palestine, along with the [Arab] Salvation Army. We left - we and those who fled with us - and we all headed for Lebanon."

[Official PA TV, Feb. 9, 2010]

We left hoping we would return

Refugee from Safed

Mahmoud Abbas

"To be honest, we were afraid. My family decided – I was the oldest of those who left with my brother's wife and his two children – that they would move us... I had two pairs of shoes, a new pair and an old pair. I said: 'I'll leave with the old pair, and leave the new pair for when we come back...' We left hoping we would return. They took us east, east of Safed, to the Jordan River."

[Abbas' Facebook page, May 14, 2014]

Terror by the Zionist gangs

Refugee from Jerusalem

Poet Iskandar Khuri

"[Iskandar Khuri's] family left first with other families due to the increasing pressure of terror by the Zionist gangs in order to protect their lives and because they thought that their absence from their homes would not last longer than two weeks, and that they would return to them after the entry of the Arab armies into Palestine."

(PA TV narrator)

Leave your houses

PA Journalist Jawad Al Bashiti

"The Arab Salvation Army told the Palestinians: 'We have come to you in order to exterminate the Zionists and their state. Leave your houses and villages, you'll return to them safely in a few days.'"

[Palestinian daily *Al-Ayyam*, May 13, 2008]

(PMW narration of newspaper)

The False promises

Abbas' advisor Mahmoud Al-Habbash

"The leaders and the elites promised us at the beginning of the Nakba in 1948 that the duration of the exile would not be long, and that it would not last more than a few days or months, and afterwards the refugees would return to their homes, which most of them did not leave until they believed the false promises made by the leaders and the political elites."

[Official PA daily, *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Dec. 13, 2006]

(PMW narration of newspaper)

Forced us to emigrate

PA daily columnist Fuad Abu Hajla

"You [Arab leaders] are still searching for the way to provide aid, like one who is looking for a needle in a haystack, or like the armies of your predecessors in 1948 who forced us to emigrate, on the pretext of clearing the battlefields of civilians."

[Official PA daily, *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, March 19, 2001]

Can't hand over my wife

Refugee

Abu Muhammad 'Amara

"The truth is that the Jews brought a mediator to us, a person we knew and who knew us. They gave us choices. The first choice was that you hand over your weapons and stay on your land and live [peacefully in Israel] the way you live. The second choice was that you leave if you don't want to hand over [your weapons]. If you don't want to leave and go away, prepare yourselves for battle. All three were hard... For me, handing over my rifle at that time was just like handing over my wife, [so we left]."

[Official PA TV, May 15, 2013]

The Media Lied

Refugee from Zakariya

Muhammad Khana

"The most dangerous thing for us was the [Arab] media... Every night towards evening I would read the paper to the elderly... They heard that in a certain town, the Jews did this and that. They killed and slaughtered. Of course, the newspapers lied, and the radio also lied. In other words, they deceived the people."

[Official PA TV, May 14, 2022]

We left out of fear

Refugee from Ajjour

Ahmed Al-Anati

"[Arabs] would come, for example: 'Leave! [The Jews] committed atrocities in Deir Yassin. Leave so they won't do horrible things to your wives.' We left [Ajjour] to Hebron, not out of fear for our bodies but for our honor."

The Arab Salvation Army said: "Leave... then you'll return"

Refugee from Allar

Ali Muhammad Karake

"The Jews were nearing our village, the Arab [Salvation] Army - may Allah protect them, they said: 'Leave, but don't go far from the village because they [the Jews] will make a short visit to the village, leave, and then you'll return to the village.' The people left with nothing, even without bread, and went to the mountains, and pitched [tents]."

[Palestinian daily *Al-Quds* YouTube channel, May 17, 2016]

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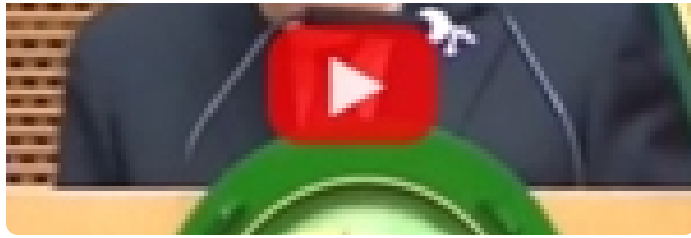
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Palestinian Authority plan: Jews should go to America or Europe, and Gazans should flood Israel

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